

Powers-Taylor Building  
13 South Thirteenth Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Main Phone: (804) 371-2327  
Fax: (804) 786-8418



*C. RAY DAVENPORT*  
*COMMISSIONER*

For Release: November 15, 2004  
Contact: Dwight E. Crews  
(804) 786-1035  
[crewsd@bls.gov](mailto:crewsd@bls.gov)

## **VIRGINIA WORKPLACE FATALITIES SHOW SMALL INCREASE IN 2003**

**RICHMOND** – The Virginia Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) showed 155 occupational fatalities in the Commonwealth in 2003, up by 9 percent from the 142 fatalities in 2002. Transportation accidents (57), which includes highway, nonhighway, pedestrian, air, water, and rail fatalities, increased by 7 from 2002 and continued to be the leading cause of workplace fatalities. Contact with objects and equipment (27) accounted for 17 percent of the work-related deaths and increased by 5 from 22 in 2002, mainly due to a rise in incidents involving workers being caught in or compressed by equipment or objects. Assaults and violent acts, which includes homicides and suicides, and falls, mainly falls to lower level, each had 24 or 15 percent of the fatal workplace injuries. (See Table A, Chart 1.)

Note on industry and occupation classifications: Beginning with the 2003 reference year, CFOI began using the 2002 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) for industries and the Standard Occupational Classification system (SOC) for occupations. Prior to 2003, the program used the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) system and the Bureau of the Census occupational classification system. Because of the substantial differences between the current and previous systems, the results by industry and occupation in 2003 constitute a break in series, and users are advised against making comparisons between the 2003 industry and occupation categories and the results for previous years.

**Table A. Fatal occupational injuries by event by year, Virginia**

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001 <sup>1</sup>	2002	2003
Transportation incidents .....	65	65	71	60	60	66	76	64	48	68	50	57
Assaults and violent acts .....	20	15	24	20	16	27	41	26	26	10	22	24
Contact with objects and equipment .....	39	29	34	16	34	32	26	19	22	31	22	27
Falls .....	20	9	11	19	18	22	23	19	22	16	24	24
Exposure to harmful substances or environments .....	20	12	17	13	16	13	10	20	18	11	17	16
Fires and explosions .....	10	5	6	4	8	3	-	5	12	9	6	7
Total workplace fatalities .....	175	135	164	132	153	166	177	154	148	146	142	155

<sup>1</sup> Numbers exclude the 165 fatalities from the September 11th terrorist attack at The Pentagon.

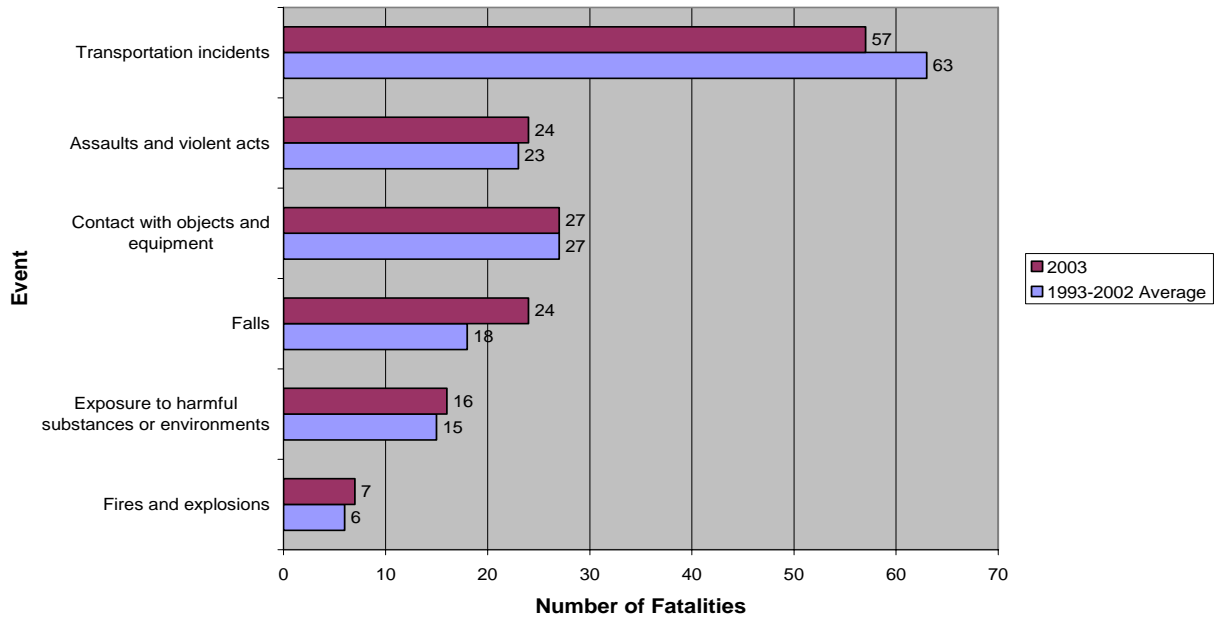
NOTE: Dashes indicate no data reported or data that do not meet publication criteria. Totals may include categories not shown separately.

Construction (41) had the most deaths of any industry sector in the census accounting for 26 percent of the fatalities. Government workers made up 21 of the occupational fatalities.

Four specific occupations accounted for almost a fourth of the workplace fatalities: **truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer (16)**, 14 were highway accidents, 8 of which were collision between vehicles, mobile equipment; **construction laborers (8)**, half were due to falls to lower level; **police and sheriff's patrol officers (7)**, 6 were homicides; and **landscaping and groundskeeping workers (6)**. (See Chart 2.)

“Knowing how fatalities happen helps pinpoint where safety and health problems may exist, and efforts to address hazards can be put in place if needed,” said Labor and Industry Commissioner C. Ray Davenport. “This year, the Department of Labor and Industry developed many new training courses for employers to emphasize important safety and health issues and implemented new program initiatives to help concentrate agency resources.”

## Virginia Workplace Fatalities By Event or Exposure



NOTE: 1993-2002 average excludes the 165 fatality cases from the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack at the Pentagon.

Chart 1

## Occupations with the highest number of fatalities, Virginia, 2003

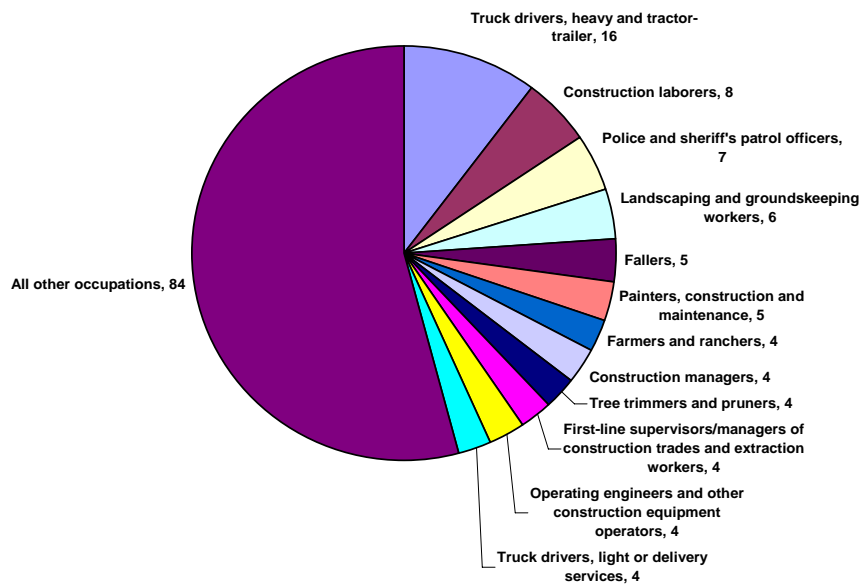


Chart 2

## **Nationwide**

A total of 5,559 fatal work injuries were recorded in 2003, a small increase from the revised total of 5,534 fatal work injuries reported for 2002, according to the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor. Despite the increase, fatal work injuries for both 2003 and 2002 were the lowest ever recorded by the fatality census, which has been conducted each year since 1992. Additional information on the national census of fatal occupational injuries can be found by accessing the following web link, <http://www.bls.gov/iif/oshcfoi1.htm>.

## **Additional Statewide Information**

For detailed statistical tables on the Virginia Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI), **see the links below**. Also, information can be requested by contacting our department at (804) 786-1035 or by sending an email to [crewsd@bls.gov](mailto:crewsd@bls.gov).

## **Technical Notes**

The Virginia Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries was conducted by the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Information on fatal occupational injuries was compiled from a variety of administrative sources including death certificates, motor vehicle traffic accident reports, medical examiner's reports, state worker's compensation reports, newspaper articles, state and federal OSHA reports, and other government investigative reports. Each fatality for the census was substantiated by at least two independent source documents.

The CFOI program is designed to provide the safety and health community with verified counts of fatal work injuries and basic information on fatalities such as how the injury occurred, the type of industry that was involved, as well as, the occupation and demographic data of the employee. It is hoped that the availability of improved, more detailed data will be used to help prevent future fatalities in the workplace.

While the purpose of the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries is to compile a complete count of traumatic workplace fatalities, information was also collected on fatal occupational illnesses that were recognized as work related or that occurred at work. A comprehensive count of fatalities resulting from occupational illnesses cannot be produced from current data largely because of the latency period associated with many occupational illnesses, as well as the difficulty in associating illnesses with exposures in the workplace. Therefore, fatal occupational illnesses are not reported in this census and are excluded from the data.

**Virginia CFI Tables:**

[Table 1 – 2003 Virginia CFI by Event](#)

[Table 2 – 2003 Virginia CFI by Worker Characteristics](#)

[Table 3 – 2003 Virginia CFI by Occupation](#)

[Table 4 – 2003 Virginia CFI by Industry](#)